



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

MAY 23 2011

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore General Management Plan
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Denver Service Center – Greg Jarvis
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

**Re: U.S. EPA Comments on the Final General Management Plan/Wilderness
Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for Apostle Islands National
Lakeshore, Bayfield and Ashland Counties, Wisconsin - EIS No. 20110155**

Dear Mr. Jarvis:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has reviewed the National Park Service's (NPS) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which evaluates the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore's (National Lakeshore) proposed Management Plan. Our review was conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

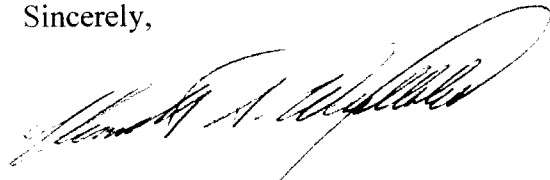
The Final EIS presents an analysis of potential impacts of four alternatives. Alternative 2 has been retained as the Preferred Alternative. EPA assigned a rating of "Lack of Objections" to the Draft EIS in our October 9, 2009 letter. Based on our review of the Final EIS, we maintain our lack of objections to the Preferred Alternative and the proposed Management Plan. However, our Draft EIS comment letter requested clarification of one aspect of the Draft Management Plan, and we reiterate that request for the Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD).

As previously stated in our October 2009 letter, the foundations for making user capacity decisions as part of the Management Plan include management zones, which qualitatively describe desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, including appropriate recreation activities, for different locations throughout the National Lakeshore. The Draft and Final EIS present five potential management zones. The action alternatives were formulated by placing the management zones in different configurations on the National Lakeshore map according to the overall concept of each alternative.

Charts conveying the acreages and percentages of land assigned to each of the five management zones under the different action alternatives are included in the analysis portion of the Draft and Final EIS. However, a similar table conveying current management zone acreages and percentages set by the 1989 comprehensive management plan was not provided in either the Draft or Final EIS. We continue to recommend including these details of the 1989 zoning arrangement. Producing a table similar to *Table 7: Management Zones in Alternative 2* would be beneficial for comparing and comprehending differences in management zones between the current and proposed management plan outlined in the Preferred Alternative. We recommend such a table be included in the ROD as part of the rationale for selecting an action alternative.

We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the planning effort for the National Lakeshore. We look forward to receiving a copy of the Record of Decision. Should you have any questions concerning the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Kathleen Kowal of my staff at (312) 353-5206 or send email to kowal.kathleen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", written in a cursive style.

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement & Compliance Assurance